



Santa Barbara Countywide Policy Manual

Subject/Title: New Hire and Promotional Incentives Policy	Number 2.1.20
Responsible Department: Human Resources	Dept. Reference: N/A
Approved by: Board of Supervisors	
Original Policy: 4/18/2000 Revisions: 3/13/2007; 6/19/2018, 10/17/ 2023	
Meet and Confer Obligations: Yes	
Scope of Application: All new employees to the County of Santa Barbara hired into critical, hard to fill classifications and current county employees promoted into critical and hard to fill positions.	

New Hire and Promotional Incentives Policy

The Board of Supervisors recognizes that the County of Santa Barbara faces significant challenges in attracting, promoting and retaining highly qualified candidates for critical ~~and hard to fill~~ positions, including but not limited to department heads, assistant department heads, emergency responders, nurses, doctors, and other specialized technical/professional positions. “Critical, hard to fill” may be defined by, but not limited to, vacancy rates, lack of available candidates, high rates of turnover, and specialized level of expertise needed.

The following policy is designed to assist the County in its efforts to fill positions by providing new hire recruiting and promotional incentives, and reimbursements. This policy provides a flexible mechanism for attracting quality outside talent to, and creating internal promotional incentives for critical County positions through discretionary incentives and reimbursements, that can be used for expenses related to relocation, temporary housing, rental/lease, education/student loans, cash incentives, or other expenses approved by the County Executive Officer (CEO), a designee assigned by the CEO in writing, or the Human

| Resources Director or assigned designee.

Section 1 – New Hire Recruiting Incentives:

Prior to opening a recruitment, or upon making a job offer, the Human Resources Director a Department Head, in consultation with the Human Resources Department Director, may identify if a position is critical, or hard to fill and if so, could the offer ~~could~~ benefit or be enhanced through the utilization of the new hire incentives allowed under this section. Incentives, not to exceed the maximum amount described in Section C, will be funded by the hiring department and may be used as a recruiting tool to incentivize candidates to consider and accept County employment. The New Hire Recruiting Incentives are designed as tools to be used in the recruiting process and include, but are not limited to, those described in Section A below:

A. Relocation Costs:

The following applies to candidates who have accepted a job offer and reside outside the County. Newly hired employees who are relocating may obtain reimbursement for a variety of relocation expenses, as outlined below:

- 1. Housing/lodging costs include but are not limited to:**
 - a) Lodging while seeking housing
 - b) Rentals - daily, weekly, monthly including lease/rental expenses and/or agreements
- 2. Transportation costs related to relocation:**
 - a) Private car mileage reimbursement in accordance with Internal Revenue Service standard rate
 - b) Airline travel (one round trip)
 - c) Rental car
- 3. Meals related to relocation:**
 - a) Per diem while appointee seeks local housing (per diem rates set by the Office of Auditor-Controller)
- 4. Moving and storage costs:**
 - a. Costs for the appointee to move household goods/furniture or for temporary storage.
 - b. The employee is responsible for making their own relocation arrangements.
 - c. Employees may not claim more than the authorized recruiting incentive as described in Section C below

B. Compelling Business Needs:

Upon recommendation by the Department Head of the hiring department, the County Executive Officer (CEO), a designee assigned by the CEO in writing, or the Human Resources Director or assigned designee, is authorized to approve incentives up to the maximum amount, as described in Section C below, for any special or compelling business need that would help the candidate in the decision to accept the job offer.

These can include any or all of the following:

1. Permanent housing offset

2. Student loan offset
3. Cash incentive

C. Maximum Incentive Allowed

1. The new hire incentives shall not exceed a total of \$30,000, (except ~~those listed in Section C, #2 as allowed below~~) ~~and which~~ can be structured to meet recruiting and hiring goals that are in the best interest of the County. This includes paying the incentive as a lump sum or structuring the payout in increments over a period of time.

The new hire incentives ~~shall not exceed a total of \$90,000 per appointment~~ for Medical Doctors, Psychiatrists, Staff Physicians, Staff Physicians Supervising, and Assistant Department Leader – Attorney/Physician ~~up to \$90,000 per appointment~~ and ~~shall not exceed \$50,000 per appointment~~ for Health Care Practitioners, ~~up to \$50,000 per appointment.~~

- ~~4. The limits outlined in 1 and 2 above ~~se limits~~ may be adjusted by CPI every 5 years starting in 2028, at a ~~flat~~ percentage rate increase equivalent to the most recently available increase in the October CPI-U for the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim area, to be effective in the pay period in which October 1 falls of the subsequent payroll year. This adjustment amount shall not be less than 0% or more than 5%.~~

2. Any employee who separates from regular County of Santa Barbara service prior to the completion of two full years (24 months) of County employment, except those who fail probation, or for those in safety positions who are unable to pass the academy, shall be required to repay the County for the new hire incentive paid to them. Such payment shall be prorated based on the new employee's months of completed service. The County of Santa Barbara will pursue the collection of the incentive paid through the appropriate channels.

D. Vacation and/or Sick Leave Hours

Upon recommendation by the Department Head of the hiring department, the Human Resources Director or designee, is authorized to approve ~~leave incentives as described below:~~

~~1. An advance(?) of additional vVacation hours equal to the first year's accrual (in addition to any MOU/Management Resolution provisions)~~

~~2. An advance(?) of Additional sSick leave hours equal to the first year's accrual (in addition to any MOU/Management Resolution provisions)~~

~~3. aAdvanced vacation accrual rates subject to usage limitations as outlined in any MOU/Management Resolution~~

~~Any vacation and/or sick leave hours granted pursuant to this Section D will be available on the first day of employment, subject to operational needs and existing countywide or departmental processes for approval.~~

~~No portion of the sick leave accrual is payable upon termination.~~

Section 2 – Promotional Incentive:

When promoting a current employee, a one-time lump sum promotional incentive may be approved by the County Executive Officer (CEO), a designee assigned by the CEO in writing, or the Human Resources Director or assigned designee,

-upon recommendation of the Department Director, if the position is critical, or hard to fill and the offer could benefit, or be enhanced through utilization of this incentive. For promotional incentives other special circumstances may be considered, such as Moving movement from a non-leadership job class into a leadership job class that results in significant changes to the employee's pension plan contributions.

Promotional Incentives are not to exceed \$10,000 and will be funded by the promoting department.

A portion of the Promotional incentive may be used for student loan debt payment as allowed by IRS regulations [IRS Publication 15-B 2023](#) and [Publication 5137](#) . This includes any tuition reimbursement monies received in the same year. The student loan debt must have been acquired while employed at the County of Santa Barbara and at the class, school or program enabled the employee to achieve the promotion.

~~The following evaluation criteria may be applied to determine if such an incentive makes sound business sense (including but not limited to):~~

- ~~1. Moving from a non-leadership job class into a leadership job class results in significant changes to the employee's pension plan contributions.~~

~~The position is hard to fill as defined by recruiting and/or promotional difficulty (i.e. lack of internal or external applicants etc.)~~

The incentive will take the form of a non-base building cash incentive and applies to regular and probationary employees.

Any employee who separates from regular County of Santa Barbara service prior to the completion of one full year (12 months) of County employment, except those who fail probation, or for those in safety positions who are unable to pass the academy, shall be required to repay the County for the promotional incentive paid to them. Such payment shall be prorated based on the new employee's months of completed service. The County of Santa Barbara will pursue the collection of the incentive paid through the appropriate channels.

Section 3 – Taxation and Documentation

1. All incentives (**except promotional incentive (student loan) that qualifies for non-taxable reimbursement per IRS regulation and is under the threshold in a calendar year**)
2. The taxation of incentives under this policy is determined in accordance with Federal and State tax laws.
3. Original documents are required to substantiate costs incurred, except for lump sum distributions.

4. Payment will be issued by Auditor-Controller Payroll Division upon receipt of approved New Hire and Promotional Incentives Authorization Worksheet and Claim Form(s).